
BEDTIME STORIES AND BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR DR. SUESS

Monterey Elementary School

Grove City, Ohio

The Action Team for Partnerships at Monterey Elementary throws a birthday party for Dr. Seuss to bring together families and the community during Read Across America Week. The birthday party encourages daily reading at home, models reading aloud for parents, and gives every child a new book. Monterey Elementary makes reading fun and interesting for a diverse group of people.

Each year the school invites celebrity readers (teachers, community business people, elected officials, and others) to the birthday party to read bedtime stories. Children come in pajamas, dressed as a favorite Seuss character, or in their street clothes. The evening schedules two twenty-five-minute sessions so that everyone can listen to more than one bedtime story. With their families, children choose to listen to two stories. Each reader has his/her own classroom. Some read a big book, some read with a character puppet or stuffed animal to accompany the story, and some dress as a character from the book. Other readers also plan short extension activities such as a writing piece, an art activity, a demonstration, or a snack that relates to the story. A Spanish reader is available for bilingual children.

Following the two reading sessions, all participants gather in the multi-purpose room for birthday cake, cookies, and punch. When families enter the multi-purpose room, they write each family member's name on slips of paper for a drawing. While everyone enjoys the bedtime snack, Action Team members draw names from the baskets. The selected children choose a brand new book to take home. Approximately ten adults receive door prizes purchased by the team or donated by a local business. Examples of adult door prizes are Barnes and Noble gift certificates, movie passes, and books. The event lasts about one and a half hours.

The first year, about 150 children and adults attended the birthday party. This past year, Monterey passed out over 250 children's books and attendance was over 300 people. The event costs about \$500, and the PTA funds 100% of the. Community readers return year after year. Families and their children love hearing stories and receiving new books to take home. Bedtime Stories and Birthday Party for Dr. Seuss is a wonderful activity to support increased reading achievement.

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